

HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

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JACKSONVILLE FIRST TO ANNOUNCE ACTUAL RENTS

Actual shelter rents averaging \$10.58 per dwelling unit per month have just been announced by the Jacksonville, Florida Housing Authority for its Brentwood development. Mr. Ray O. Edwards, Executive Director, advises the Bulletin that these rent levels are about 35 per cent below the original estimates and place housing indisputably within reach of low income groups who otherwise are forced to live in substandard accommodations. The average rents indicated in the schedule below will reach tenants with average annual family incomes around \$750.

1-Bedroom Units - - - \$9.75 and \$10.00
2-Bedroom Units - - - 10.50 " 10.75
3-Bedroom Units - - - 11.00

Tenants will be billed, in addition to shelter rent, a small additional charge for utilities, which will be made available to them at much lower cost than they could be purchased individually.

USHA's Administrator Straus congratulated the Authority upon being the first in the nation to have passed a resolution definitely establishing the dwelling rents and the policies governing the administration of a USHA aided project.

Tenant Selection Policies

Three basic principles will govern tenant selection.

1. Only families in the lowest group will be accepted. The bulk of such families will probably be in the \$15 a week income class. Applications from families whose income is received from WPA employment will be subject to the same regulations as other applicants.

2. Only families now living under sub-

standard conditions will be considered. In determining whether or not a dwelling is substandard the need of major repairs; or the absence of private inside toilet, inside bath, proper ventilation, running water, or reasonably convenient room arrangement will be considered. A house that violates city health or sanitary regulations is considered substandard. Overcrowding in a house otherwise meeting minimum standards of decency may be considered to constitute a substandard condition.

3. To prevent overcrowding in the new project the Authority has ruled that only family groups can occupy a dwelling unit. Dependent relatives may be included in the group, but no lodgers will be permitted. Only couples may occupy a 1-bedroom unit. 2-bedroom units will be available only to families of not more than four persons. No more than 6 persons will be allowed to occupy 3-bedroom units.

Construction Cost—Equipment

Brentwood was started December and it is expected that it will be ready for occupancy July 1. The average net construction cost is announced as \$2690 per dwelling unit. Each unit will be equipped with electric refrigerator, electric range, oil-burning space heater, and oil-burning hot water heaters.

The development stands on a partially wooded site within easy walking distance of schools and stores and adjacent to a bus line. Recreational facilities and a community building are available in Brentwood City Park, adjoining the development on the east.

The Authority expects to take over on lease from the United States Housing Authority previous to July 1, the 215-family Durkeeville

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project built by the PWA Housing Division. At that time rentals in this Negro occupied development will be adjusted to conform more nearly with the scale of rentals in Brentwood Park.

The Authority is now planning an additional project for which \$2 million has been earmarked by USHA.

Austin Close Second

The Austin Housing Authority, the first in Texas to secure a USHA loan contract, by its announcement of rentals for three developments now nearing completion, places a close second to Detroit. The following tabulation, submitted by Mr. Gunnar Mykland, Assistant Director of the Authority, lists shelter and shelter rent plus utilities for the various sized dwelling units in the Authority's three developments.

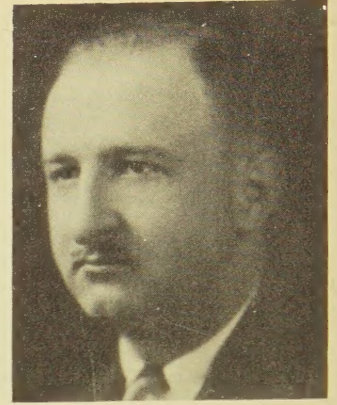
| Size of Dwll'g. Unit | Shelter Rent | Shelter Rent & Utilities |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| CHALMERS ST. (White Occupancy) | | |
| 2½ rooms | \$8.45 | \$12.45 |
| 3 rooms | 8.45 | 12.70 |
| 4 rooms | 8.70 | 13.20 |
| 4½ rooms | 8.95 | 13.45 |
| 5 rooms | 8.95 | 13.70 |
| 6 rooms | 9.20 | 14.20 |
| Average | \$8.62 | \$13.03 |
| ROSEWOOD (Negro Occupancy) | | |
| 2 rooms | \$6.65 | \$10.65 |
| 3 rooms | 6.90 | 11.15 |
| 4 rooms | 7.15 | 11.65 |
| 5 rooms | 7.40 | 12.15 |
| Average | \$6.97 | \$11.28 |
| SANTA RITA (Mexican Occupancy) | | |
| 2 rooms | \$6.20 | \$10.20 |
| 3 rooms | 6.45 | 10.70 |
| 4 rooms | 6.70 | 11.20 |
| Average | \$6.59 | \$10.98 |

"MANAGING LOW-RENT HOUSING"

In reviewing the record of the Management Training Institute held at Washington, D.C., June 13-24, 1938, published under the title "Managing Low-Rent Housing,"* I was extremely impressed with the splendid and comprehensive coverage of the salient problems of public housing management.

As I review the efforts of the last 3½ years and recall the first attempt toward training public housing managers in the Management Training School, in Washington,

D.C. in 1935, I cannot help but contrast the feeling of futility and almost frustration that appeared all through this first institute, with the present attitude of managers.



Manager Parkside

There was a group of men and women striving to learn something about a subject on which little or no knowledge had been developed up to that time. As a member of that group I can say that we had no textbooks and only rather limited information on the experience that was available at that time.

Now we have, within three years after that first institute, a published record of actual experiences from all parts of the country proving that that air and desire to learn has been partially achieved. Here are the first fruits of the pioneers. This record is the beginning of a great work. It is by no means a manual; and probably it is best so; for any attempt to crystallize thought or prescribe management techniques at this early stage would probably discourage the evolution of many desirable practices that can be worked out only by well informed experimentation.

The paper delivered by Mr. Richard F. Voell covering the subject of "Objectives and Functions of the United States Housing Authority" under the title "Management Practice in Going Programs" appears to me to be one of the most outstanding contributions to the institute not only because it sets forth so clearly the general and contractual relationships between the United States Housing Authority and the local authorities which have heretofore been quite generally unknown or misunderstood, but it very pointedly states the need for the participation of experienced management in the development of future projects.

The papers on tenant participation in maintenance by Mr. Robert Taylor of Chicago and Mr. Raymond A. Voigt of Milwaukee provide a subject of study for site planners and architects which should enable them to develop new projects in which operating costs can be reduced to a minimum.

E. P. Opperman

Housing Manager Parkside, Detroit

*\$2.00 to non-members; \$1.00 to members.

DETROIT SELECTS TENANTS AND MANAGERS

Carl Bradt, Director-Secretary of the Detroit Housing Commission, submits the following account of tenant selection and wonders whether it establishes some sort of record.

"Our tenant selection crew started work on August 17 for Parkside (775 dwelling units) and September 7 for Brewster (701 dwelling units).

"The first tenant moved into each of the projects on October 15. We had completed investigation and certification of all of the applicants for both projects by the end of December at Brewster Homes and by the end of January at Parkside Homes and the projects were both filled by the middle of February. The lag between the certification and the signing of leases and occupancy was due to the necessity of the various tenants to giving notices to their previous landlords and making arrangements for moving, fumigation, etc. In other words, in approximately six months from the time our tenant selection staff started work and four months from the time the first tenant moved in, our tenant selection work was finished."

Who are The Tenants?

Mr. Bradt has also sent us an unusually good breakdown of the statistics on the tenant families at Parkside Homes. It includes nationalities of tenants, their occupations, the number of children by age groups; low, high and average family incomes in the different size housing units, the number of tenants receiving public aid as the only or as a supplemental source of income, classified by type of aid; and ownership of automobiles.

Twenty-four national groups are represented. Of these the German, English, Irish and Polish are most numerous. They account for 527 out of 774 families. Approximately 100 occupations are tabulated. The following are the most common: assemblers, 117; clerks, 70; drivers, 45; gas station attendants, 10; grinders, 13; inspectors, 28; laborers, 33; machine operators, 11; machinists, 25; maids, 10; mechanics, 11; metal finishers, 14; polishers, 14; press operators, 57; salesmen, 31; stockmen, 27; welders, 28. Of 773 employed persons in the project, 458 work in the automobile or associated industries. This careful tabulation would seem particularly useful in combatting the loose charge that public housing does not reach the workingman and his family.

In addition to those privately employed, 42 families receive their total income from public aid and 18 others have their income supplemented by public assistance. Of this total of 60, 33 receive mothers' pensions and 16 old age pensions.

Mr. Bradt reports that the Detroit Housing Commission as a matter of policy has been using the two-room apartments chiefly for elderly couples on old age pensions and widowed mothers with one or two small children. He reports "a very favorable reaction in the city as obviously these old folks and widowed mothers with small children do have a pretty tough time to get a decent place to live within the amount of money they have to spend."

Population

The tabulations on the composition of population and family income by size of dwelling unit are:

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Children under 2 years | 279 | |
| " from 2 to 5 years | 369 | |
| " " 5 to 10 " | 334 | |
| " " 10 to 16 " | 251 | |
| " over 16 years | <u>53</u> | 1286 |
| Adults | | <u>1500</u> |
| Total | | 2786 |

Income

| 48 2-room Units | | 398 2-room Units | |
|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
| Low | \$ 411.00 | Low | \$ 543.82 |
| High | 898.78 | High | 1884.00 |
| Average | 678.95 | Average | 1246.02 |
| 253 3-room Units | | 74 5-room Units | |
| Low | \$ 624.00 | Low | \$ 775.00 |
| High | 1315.85 | High | 1813.00 |
| Average | 1031.76 | Average | 1435.67 |

Social Activities up to April 1, 1939

| Organization | No. Meetings Held | Av. Attendance |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Cooking School | 11 | 38 |
| Parkside Cooperative | 53 | 37 |
| Parkside Recreational Assn. | 24 | 46 |
| Boy Scouts | 7 | 31 |
| Mothers' Club | 28 | 37 |
| Woodcraft Class | 6 | 62 |
| Boys' Club | 4 | 14 |
| Orchestra | 4 | 33 |
| Story Hour | 1 | 143 |
| Council of Social Agencies | <u>1</u> | <u>42</u> |
| Totals | 139 | 38 |

The tabulation included another column of total attendance, which, of course, is simply the average attendance shown above multiplied by the number of meetings. It is a useful unit of measurement and is omitted here simply because of the shortage of space.

NAHO Trainee Makes Good

Recently the Detroit Civil Service Commission gave competitive examinations for several housing positions with the Detroit Housing Commission, including the post of Manager. The top score out of 137 applications was made by Eugene P. Opperman, a graduate of NAHO's first management training course and subsequently Assistant Manager of Parklawn, Milwaukee. At the request of the Housing Commission the Civil Service Commission waived the usual residence requirement for such positions in Detroit. As a result, 8 out of the 137 applicants lived outside of Detroit.

MORE FIELD NOTES

Presented below are a few more field notes by Messrs. Kidd and Stannard continuing the series presented in the last issue. No particular effort has been made to delete critical comments inasmuch as this type of information is frequently more useful than accounts of successful practices only.

LaSalle Place, Louisville

LaSalle Place, a 210-unit vacant-land project for white families, was opened for occupancy in December 1937 and leased by the local Authority from USHA March 1, 1938. It has been continuously fully occupied. A total of only 21 families moved from the project during 1938. All units are contained in either one- or two-story row houses, the majority of the units having chain link wire fences around their back yards. Some dissatisfaction has arisen from those tenants whose back yards are not fenced in. As these fences were installed as a part of original equipment, there is no apparent reason why they were not erected throughout the project.

There is no adequate community space on the project. Apartment units, converted into social rooms and sandwiched in between occupied units, provide the only space for community activities with the exception of the handicraft shop. This is located in one of the rooms in the small boiler plant and is the most popular of all activities. It is run by WPA. Eventually, the management hopes to add a second story to the boiler plant to take care of all tenant ac-

tivities. As it is now, social rooms between dwelling units are a source of irritation to both management and tenants.

The type of surface used here on play areas has proved to be the most satisfactory of any type surface found in use at any of the projects visited. It is a composition emulsified asphalt and sand. Shrubbery, planted in a dirt border, surrounding the playground, has provided a constant maintenance problem. It is impossible to keep children from walking across it.

Dixie Homes, Memphis

Dixie Homes is a slum clearance project of one- and two-story flat-roofed row houses containing 633 dwelling units for Negroes. All two-story buildings have concrete slab gallery porches running their full length at the second story level. Results in appearance are unusual and attractive. The USHA lease for this project, as well as for Lauderdale Courts, was renewed on March 31, 1939. Occupants are of the better Negro type and, according to local opinion, maintain their homes in much better condition than do the tenants of the white project.

The usual type of steam boiler plant supplies central heating. The threat of "utility shut-off" in units where tenants are delinquent in rent payment usually results in prompt collection.

With the exception of one room in the management building which houses a small branch of the city library (operated by a member of the management staff), space for community activities is available only in dwelling units set aside for the purpose.

It is the local opinion that poor judgment was used in constructing such a large number of two-room units (182) in the project. The greater number of Negro families usually require more than this number of rooms -- at least, that is the local management's experience.

DISTRIBUTION POLICY ON BULLETIN

The HOUSING MANAGEMENT BULLETIN is distributed to members of NAHO who have signified their desire to receive it for a trial period. Copies are available to non-members only by purchase of individual issues at 25¢ each. It is anticipated that the BULLETIN will become shortly the official organ of the Housing Management Division of NAHO, now being organized.